

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 404

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Charles Kelley on his sixty years of ministering to the people of Rockwood and Roane County.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause to specially recognize those venerable pastors who, throughout their years of service to their communities and congregations, have brought wisdom and comfort to those in search of spiritual solace and guidance; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable Tennessee churchman is Charles Kelley, who has been ministering to the people of Rockwood and Roane County for six decades; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, when Mr. Kelley was twenty-three years old, he answered a call to preach; at the time, he was a member of Mill Baptist Church near the Kayser-Roth Hosiery Mill in Harriman; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kelley attended Harrison Chilhowie Academy, later Kings Academy, in Seymour, and continued his education at Carson-Newman College; and

WHEREAS, his first church was Beech Park Baptist Church in Oliver Springs, where he began ministering in 1949; in 1953, he moved to the Pond Grove Baptist Church and then to Oakdale First Baptist Church in 1957; and

WHEREAS, on August 12, 1967, Charles Kelley began to preach at Clymersville Baptist Church; nearby Rockwood First Baptist Church had taken the small church on as a mission; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Kelley began his work at Clymersville Baptist, the congregation included only nine people; six years, later, the Clymersville church had grown to 122 members. Today, estimated membership has reached roughly 350 people; and

WHEREAS, while other churches change pastors often, Mr. Kelley made a home at Clymersville Baptist, where he remained until he officially retired in 2006; in the tradition of the old country preacher, Charles Kelley ministered not only to the members of his congregation but also anyone else in the community who might have come to him in search of spiritual growth and understanding; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kelley always supported himself and his family with work outside the church, like many of the pastors he met when he first began preaching; for most of his life, Charles Kelley sold insurance when he was not engaged in the work of the church; and

WHEREAS, although he is officially retired today, Mr. Kelley continues to serve area churches, often taking the pulpit at a Roane County church or officiating at a funeral; he estimates that he has had between forty and fifty funerals every year since 1980, the year his wife died; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kelley has enjoyed the love and companionship of his family, which includes Jeanie Burris, Charles Kelly, Jr., Sharon Barker, and Jasper Craig Kelley; three of his children, Claude Kelley, Terry Kelley, and Lynn Huskins, are deceased; and

WHEREAS, son Jasper Craig Kelley is a minister like his father and serves at Central Baptist Church in Alcoa; Charles Kelley's son-in-law John Burris is a pastor in Ohio, and grandson Jeffrey Burris is also a minister, serving at St. Bethlehem First Baptist in Clarksville; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his long career in the ministry, Charles Kelley has touched the lives of many Tennesseans, who have no doubt gained immeasurably from his spiritual counsel; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kelley epitomizes the selflessness and compassion that are characteristic of the true Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Charles Kelley on his sixty years of ministering to the people of Rockwood and Roane County, thank him for all he has done to improve the lives of so many Tennesseans, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.